

Kansans With Mumps Should Stay Home

As Kansas approaches more than 400 cases of confirmed/probable mumps, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) urges Kansans who contract mumps to stay home for nine days to avoid spreading the virus and increasing the scope of the outbreak.

The majority of the cases are concentrated in Douglas County (182), but there are also cases in Anderson, Atchison, Barton, Butler, Chautauqua, Clay, Cowley, Crawford, Dickinson, Ellis, Franklin, Geary, Gove, Grant, Harvey, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Labette, Leavenworth, Lyon, Marshall, Miami, Norton, Osage, Phillips, Pottawatomie, Pratt, Reno, Riley, Rooks, Saline, Scott, Sedgwick, Seward, Shawnee, Sheridan, Wabaunsee, and Wyandotte counties.

Minimize Outbreak:

“While those who contract mumps are most contagious up to four days after the onset of symptoms, it is still possible for someone to spread the virus to others for as long as nine days,” said KDHE Division of Health Director Howard Rodenberg. “KDHE recognizes the challenges this may pose, but after careful evaluation in order to minimize the ongoing spread of this outbreak and to protect the public’s health, we believe the nine day recommendation should be followed.

“Outbreaks are also opportunities for the public health community to learn and grow. We will remain flexible, and our strategies may change as we adapt,” he added.

Vaccinations:

KDHE is also recommending Kansans check their mumps vaccination history to determine if they have actually received the two recommended measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccinations. KDHE and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend two MMR vaccinations for increased protection against mumps. This is a recent change from earlier recommendations from CDC.

“By getting both vaccinations, your protection against mumps increases to approximately 90 to 95 percent; therefore, if you’ve only received the first vaccination, go ahead and get a second one,” said Rodenberg. “This recommendation is for adults and children, although children may stay on their regular vaccination schedule, getting their second dose prior to school entry.”

Two MMRs are required for kindergarten school entry in Kansas, and have been since the early 1990s. The first vaccination is given at 12-15 months of age. The second is recommended prior to school entry, typically at 4-6 years of age.

“Other ways to minimize getting mumps include practice good hand washing; avoid sharing drinking cups and eating utensils; and avoid close contact with anyone who has the mumps,” Rodenberg added.

Exclusion/Isolation/Quarantine:

Under current state laws and regulations, individuals who were born in or after 1957 who have not had any mumps vaccinations or history of mumps may be asked to stay home from school or other events/gatherings during a mumps outbreak (exclusion/isolation/quarantine). Decisions regarding these individuals will be jointly determined by local health departments and school/organization officials.

Mumps is usually a relatively mild viral infection. It is transmitted through saliva, coughing, sneezing, or being in close contact (within three feet of the person for an hour). Symptoms include fever, swelling and tenderness in glands around the neck and jaw. Laboratory tests can be useful in diagnosis, especially if the symptoms are not typical, if a person has been vaccinated, or had the disease in the past.

Mumps can be severe, although this is very rare. Severe cases can result in meningitis, deafness and sterility in men.